Volume 3, Issue 38   Atari Online News, Etc.   September 21, 2001

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->From the Editor's Keyboard                "Saying it like it is!"
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It's really tough not to stay glued to the television set, wondering if
survivors would be pulled out of the New York and Pentagon terrorist attack
sites; to follow the investigation of the murderers behind the attacks; the
news of pending military action; the stories of the victims; and how all of
this has affected us all. But, I've made myself try and return to my
"normal" routine and not dwell upon every bit of news. As a journalist, I
realize it's the media's responsibility to report what's happening. And,
because this is such an enormous story, we're inundated with news and
commentary. Like it, or not, we're living dramatic history as it unfolds.

These recent events have affected everything around us and will continue to
do so for years to come. It's not the first catastrophe that has affected
us, nor will it be the last. I was born during the Korean War (I just
turned the big FIVE-OH this week!), was draft age during the Vietnam war
(and fortunate enough to not be called up!), the Middle East crisis, the
Cuban crisis, Kennedy's death, the Gulf War, Chernobyl, and many more. Maybe
this crisis is the one which will affect us so much that we can do something
about it and affect some real positive change in the world. It will take a
lot of work and cooperation throughout the world. One can only wonder if
it's something possible. If the history that I grew up in is any
indication, I seriously have my doubts. And I do know that it's going to
get worse before it gets better. But I also know that some day the world
will wake up and realize that there has to be a better way. We can only
hope that the time has arrived.

Until next time...

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                     Icon Extract 1.2

Hello,

Excuse me for my english.
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Here is the new version of Icon Extract 1.2. This one supports icons 32
bits of XP windows. The interfacing in fashion 2 and 16 colors have been
improved and the display is correct in monochrome fashion.

Small recall, this program permits to recover icons windows to the ICO
format, CUR, ANI as well as libraries of icons to the ICL format and
DLL. All icons in 2, 16, 256 and True Color (24 and 32 bits) are saved
in a RSC file (as the DESKICON.RSC). A RSC file is created for every
size of icon (16, 32, 48, 64, 72, 96 and 128 pixels).

The installation is achieved with GEM Setup 2.01.

It is recommended to have a fast machine (68030 + 68881/2) or to work
with Magic PC or Magic Mac.

Good downloading and see you later for the version 1.3 (support of the
XPM files of the Linux world).  Bests regards,

F.LAFABRIE

http://www.club-internet.fr/perso/lafabrie/


PRESTO Released


PRESTO released as Shareware. Presto page completed.

For those of you in the dark, a fantastic MIDI composition package by
Dr Guerino Mazzola has just been released as shareware. I have been working
on the page which has screen shots and lots of info about it.

Finally got it done. Plan to do a tutorial sometime, but for now...this is
enough info as well as full docs and also the Prestino slide show
tutorial available in the english docs zip. Looks like a very cool
Composition package. Definitely worth looking into. You will only find this
on the Atari platform!! Makes it worth keeping the ol' ST!

The shareware fee is only $10.00 in american money. Support Atari
programmers and send it in! Details on the page.

http://sites.netscape.net/timconrardy/presto.htm

BTW: please let me know if you  can get to the page as I have been
having problems lately accessing my site (netscape.net problem)

TIM

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Tim Conrardy
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If you use Atari for Midi come join us at Atari-Midi!
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Tim's Atari Midi World:  http://sites.netscape.net/timconrardy/index.htm
Atari-Midi Mailing List: http://www.yahoogroups.com/group/atari-midi

Browser Poll Results On Atari-Users.Net

The new poll is "Do you have a Multitasking OS on your Atari?"

Stop by www.atari-users.net to cast your vote in you new poll!

On the last poll.. here are the "totals"

Would you "Pledge" funds for a contest to create a new Atari Browser?

Yes - $5 8.64 % (14) = 70

Yes - $15 10.49 % (17) = 255

Yes - $25 26.54 % (43) = 1075

Yes - $50 27.78 % (45) = 2250

Yes - $50+ 11.11 % (18) = 900 (18*50)

Total YES "Pledge" amount 4550

No 5.56 % (9)

Maybe 9.88 % (16)

Total Votes: 162

THANKS TO EVERYONE WHO VOTED!!

Rob

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PEOPLE ARE TALKING
compiled by Joe Mirando
joe@atarinews.org


Hidi ho friends and neighbors. If you're like me, you are growing weary
of the horrible news that just won't go away. I'm afraid that it's not
as simple as turning off the television. We've entered a new age. I'm
not even sure that I can define it, but we all feel it, and we all know
what it is. Perhaps it's the end of yet another "age of innocence" for
all of us.

Unlike Dana, I don't have a problem with including non-Atari or
non-computer news here. Dana's style is his own, and he's good at it.
It's too easy to just run rampant with unrelated stuff. I should know...
I do it just about every week. Each of us is okay with the others'

style. As a matter of fact, our comments often dovetail quite nicely
even though we haven't discussed the coming issue. We're fairly
different people, and we're stronger... maybe even better... because of
it. If it wasn't for our differences (and I don't just mean Dana and I),
there would be no need for editorials, no need for elections, no need
for most of the things that make us real, honest to goodness individuals.

I don't intend to go on and on about this, but there are a few things
I'd like to mention about the catastrophe in New York. Perhaps you've
thought of these things too, but perhaps you haven't. If you have, then
take comfort in the fact that you are not alone. If you haven't, then
take comfort in the fact that we all see things differently, and that
those differences are what make us strong.

First of all, does anyone else remember the X-Files spin-off "The Lone
Gunmen"? There was one episode that had elements of what happened in New
York. I'm still surprised that no one has mentioned this publicly.
C'mon, there must have been SOMEONE ELSE watching besides me!

Second, by the time you read this, the networks will have already put on
their telethon to benefit the victims. I hope that you did what you
could to help out, but please don't get the idea that a few bucks is all
it's going to take. In the coming weeks, months, and probably years, we
will all be tested and taxed (and I don't necessarily mean monetary tax).

Of course, having the twisted mind that I do, when I first heard about
the telethon, I flashed back to a move from 22 years ago. John
Ritter (Three's Company) played the President of the United States. Does
anyone else remember "Americathon"?

Damn. I watch WAY too much television.

Before we get to the UseNet stuff, I just want to mention one more
thing...

In watching footage from around the world (not just during this
situation, but in general), it seems that you'll almost always see armed
military personnel where there is unrest, disagreement, or disaster. THAT
is what's been missing in New York this past week. This has been
probably the worst attack on civilians in history and yet there are no
armed troops. No militia to make sure that things that "shouldn't be
seen" aren't, no jack-booted thugs, no goose-stepping, no cadence calls.
Just the sound of friends and neighbors pitching in because there's a
need.

Hidi ho, friends and neighbors.


From the comp.sys.atari.st NewsGroup
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Chris Simon asks:

"Does anyone have any experience of HD Driver v7.51 (or below) and Zip
drives?  Does it work, basically?"

Martin Byttebier replies simply:

"It surely works."

Robert Schaffner goes into a little bit more detail:

"Works fine since years here. (HDDriver 7.8)
Use ID scan, switch on SCSI ID where your ZIP is connected to.
Save driver to boot. Reboot. Ready to use."

Chris now asks:

"I've seen SCSI to USB adaptors "to connect a SCI device to the USB
port on your PC", but not the other way around.  Are there indeed any
USB to SCSI adaptors, so that I can attach a USB device to my Falcon,
or do these SCSI to USB adaptors work in reverse too?  How would the
SCSI ID be set?  Do USB devices have a similar concept and the ID
would simply be passed through as a SCSI ID?"

Dr. Uwe Seimet tells Chris:

"I don't think there are USB to SCSI adapters. Why would you want to use
such an adapter? USB is much slower than SCSI, even the Falcon's SCSI
bus has higher transfer rates than USB 1.x."

David Smith adds:

"I am not an expert.  That said, I have not seen any device that allows
the connection of an USB device to a SCSI port.  The USB port requires
functionality that is not part of the SCSI standard, such as the ability
to hot swap."

Uwe tells David:

"Hot swapping is not a problem with SCA SCSI drives. There are
workstations where you can add and remove SCSI peripherals when the
system is running. Even with the Atari you can do hot swapping if you
can ensure that you can prevent a short-circuit when removing or adding
a SCSI device. (This is easier with the SCA connector.) It is also not a
problem for most software based on the SCSI driver. Just make a bug
rescan after adding or removing a device.

Note that there are features supported by SCSI which are not supported
by USB."

Chris Simon adds this:

"An interesting postscript - I emailed Belkin about whether USB to SCSI
adaptors existed (and they don't) and whether SCSI to USB adaptors can
work in reverse (which they don't), and I was advised that the most
efficient way to connect a USB device is to upgrade my OS to Win98 or
MacOS, or install a PCMCIA card!

I replied saying that wasn't possible as my computer is neither a PC
nor Mac, and got a reply asking what my computer was.  I replied Atari
Falcon, and back came the classic quote "It is not possible to upgrade
game only electronic equipment to accept USB".

I did think of trying to email Belkin management about their quite
ignorant sales staff!  (Obviously who cannot tell the difference
between a computer and a games console, and who do not recognize SCSI
as a proper communication protocol)."

Hallvard Tangeraas asks about a fair price for a MegaSTe:

"I've got a chance to buy a Mega STe, but unfortunately the seller is not
"giving" it away as I was hoping for.

I've had it on loan here for a while to check it out, and so far I've
found out that the disk drive is mis-aligned (I believe it has to be
replaced, but he says it can be re-aligned easily), it does NOT have an
AJAX chip/HD disk drive (only 720Kb/DD), the keyboard is slightly worn
(I had to open it and exchange one membrane contact with another as the
contact for the [RETURN] key wasn't working very well. Apart from that
it seems to work OK, but the seller had the plastic bits in front of the
cooling fan removed as well.

Just how much would a machine such as this be worth, and if he's still
asking too much (he hasn't decided yet how much, but my offer of around
UKP 45/US$ 55 has been flat out refused), will I be missing out on a lot
by buying an STe from someone else instead? I've never used a Mega STe
before, so I don't know how much the added speed really means in real
life.
I won't be able to use the 16MHz with Notator, so it'll have to be for
other applications.

As for the STe: I already have one of those fully working, but since I'm
working on placing it inside a 19" rack with all sorts of custom
hardware etc. I need another machine to use while my existing STe is
being worked on.

Any views appreciated. Basically, give me a good reason
to buy a Mega STe instead of an STe."

Peter Goffee tells Hallvard:

"Unless you're really burning to buy a Mega STe, my advice would be not
to bother with that offer. Check other online auctions like eBay and
loot. He *says* the hard drive is quick to fix, but is it worth the
risk? 50 odd UKP is a lot for a machine with trouble.

There is not a lot of difference between the STe Mega and standard.
The case is a cosmetic difference, and the extra speed the other. It
has more expansion slots, but getting hard now to buy something to put
in them! The extra speed also means the vast majority of games will
not work.

You can replace the hard drive for 10 or 20 UKP. The bottom line is ,
do you want an Atari with a hard drive? If so, put an offer in for
nothing more than 50 UKP. There are whole working systems out there
for sale which would be a better bargain."

Patti Wagen asks about Atari ->PC floppy transfer:

"I gave my Atari ST to a neighbor's kid and it is no longer available to
me. I thought I had copied all the files to PC format first, but have
misplaced the files.  I have some files I need on an ST disk, but can't
read them. I tried Norton to add the boot sector, and Norton hung.  Does
anyone know of a PC utility that writes the boot sector without
destroying the data?"

Bob Retelle tells Patti:

"There used to be two IBM programs which would let you access the data
on an Atari floppy disk without writing ANYTHING to the disk (which in
my opinion would be the safest way to deal with an irreplaceable
disk).

I haven't seen a source for these programs in a long, long time, but
they might show up on an FTP search engine (I haven't had time to look
for them myself, unfortunately).

Look for either   ST2PC.EXE   or   STTOPC.EXE

The programs will READ the files from an Atari formatted floppy and
let you COPY the files onto an IBM disk drive without actually
changing the boot sector on the Atari floppy."


Well folks, that's it for this time around. Tune in again next week,
same time, same station, and be ready to listen to what they are saying
when...

PEOPLE ARE TALKING



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->In This Week's Gaming Section  - 300,000 GameCubes Sold!
  """"""""""""""""""""""""""""""""    Xbox Launch Delayed!
                                   Attacks Cause Gaming Changes!
                                   And much much more!



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->A-ONE's Game Console Industry News   -  The Latest Gaming News!
  """""""""""""""""""""""""""""""""""""



               Nintendo Says 300,000 GameCubes Sold


Japanese game maker Nintendo Co Ltd said on Tuesday about 300,000 of its
new GameCube consoles were sold in the first weekend after launch,
disappointing some analysts who had expected the shipment to sell out.

Nintendo had targeted initial shipments of 500,000 consoles for its
September 14 launch in Japan but said delays in production and
transportation forced it to come up 50,000 short.

Despite the hiccup, the Kyoto-based game maker said everything was going to
plan. ``We are satisfied with the sales figures, they are right on
target," said a Nintendo spokesman.

The GameCube is Nintendo's contender in the competitive next-generation game console market, dominated by the PlayStation 2 from Sony Corp . The market awaits the launch of Xbox from Microsoft on November 8 in the United States.

The GameCube launch lacked the hype surrounding Nintendo's big name rivals, overshadowed by the attacks on the United States that shocked the world and dominated media attention.

Analysts said less hype may have attributed to less demand for the bright-purple GameCube, priced at 25,000 yen ($210).

''I'm disappointed, although I am not surprised," said Lisa Spicer, an analyst at ING Barings Securities.

''This does not mean it is a complete failure for them. Keep in mind, that just like the Americans, the Japanese were glued to their TVs, last week."

Nintendo shares have plummeted 25 percent since Wednesday, with Spicer pointing to investor concerns that in the aftermath of the attacks the company may see weak U.S. sales when it launches the GameCube in the United States on November 18.

Nintendo said it would ship an additional 50,000 consoles by the end of the month and intends to meets its shipment targets of 1.4 million units in Japan and 1.1 million in North America by the end of December.


Microsoft Says Unsure Now of XBox Launch Quantities


As Microsoft ramps up production of its upcoming XBox video game console this week, game publishers and some analysts have started to question whether the company can make its target for the number of units available for the November launch.

Microsoft has previously said it would ship 600,000 to 800,000 consoles when it launches the new system on Nov. 8 in the United States and between 1 million and 1.5 million by year-end.

But the software giant will not know how many of its forthcoming XBox consoles it will have available on the much-heralded launch day until production at a plant in Mexico hits full capacity, a spokesman said Wednesday.

''We won't know real, day-one quantities until we're at peak production," said James Bernard, a Microsoft spokesman. ''We're really being cautious about our day-one quantities."

The XBox is still on track for its Nov. 8 launch, Bernard said, adding hat the company told retailers last week that the console was about to begin production.

Microsoft's North American XBoxes are being manufactured by Singapore-based contract manufacturing company Flextronics International Ltd. at a facility in Guadalajara, Mexico. A separate facility in Hungary is making the game box for the European market.

During a conference call Wednesday for video game publisher Take-Two

Interactive Software Inc., which plans to make games for the new machine, Take-Two president Paul Eibeler said he understood that Microsoft was going to ship fewer units than initially planned for the XBox launch.

When analyst Robert DeLean at brokerage Morgan Keegan said he understood XBox would launch with about 300,000 units available, Eibeler said that estimate was ''as good as any on the market."

Microsoft's Bernard said the company is looking at its manufacturing schedule, and could not say whether the 300,000 figure would be closer to the final tally.

An analyst who covers the industry and spoke on condition of anonymity said he had heard from game publishing and retail sources that the launch quantity would be 300,000 units, but said the industry has already adjusted to the lowered expectation.

It was was also still likely that Microsoft would make its calendar year-end targets of 1 million to 1.5 million units shipped, he said. ''I think what they're going to do is it's going to be 300,000 and then they're going to stagger it out," the analyst said.

Microsoft's Bernard said the company's plan was to roll out an additional 100,000 to 150,000 units every week until reaching its target for shipping.

Last year Sony Corp. ran into problems last year when it delivered far fewer PlayStation 2 consoles than projected on launch day, leading to shortages, unfulfilled orders and disappointed consumers.


Microsoft Delays XBox Launch, No Comment on Units


Microsoft said on Friday that it would delay the launch of its XBox video game console by one week to Nov. 15 but declined to say whether the number of units available at launch would meet the company's initial target or fall short, as many now believe inevitable.

The decision to delay the much-anticipated launch of the next-generation game platform was taken in the past week after a review of the company's preparations, said Robbie Bach, chief XBox officer for Microsoft. Microsoft still plans to ship between 1 million and 1.5 million units to retailers by the end of the calendar year, Bach said.

When asked if Microsoft was sticking by its initial projection of making 600,000 to 800,000 available units at launch, or lowering it, as many in the industry now believe, Bach would not provide a figure, saying ''we've just moved on to not focusing on the day-one number."

Analysts, retailers, and game publishers have said the number of XBox consoles available on the launch day would be closer to 300,000, or about half of the initial target.

Production of the XBox consoles has begun at a plant in Guadalajara, Mexico run by Flextronics International Ltd., which has outsourced the assembly work from Microsoft, Bach said.

''They are doing a fabulous job," he said.

The XBox represents Microsoft's push into the $20-billion video game industry, now dominated by Japan's Sony Corp. and Nintendo Co Ltd., both of which have competing 128-bit game platforms.

Recent slowdowns in air cargo shipments should not affect the XBox launch because the shipping and distribution will be mostly handled by truck, Bach said.

''We'll be able to replenish the North American market at a rate of over 100,000 units a week," he said, allowing Microsoft to make its year-end target of shipping 1 million to 1.5 million units.

''That's really the important number," he said.

Microsoft plans to have 15 to 20 games available at launch, and 30 by the end of the year. Microsoft was evaluating titles for any material that might be considered offensive in light of the attacks on New York and the Washington, Bach said, in line with steps other video game publishers have already announced.

''Generally, what you see in the marketplace is people doing what's appropriate...and we will do the same," he said.

In late August, Microsoft delayed the launch of the XBox in Japan to Feb. 22 of next year in order to concentrate resources and available units in North America. Microsoft has said it will spend about $500 million marketing XBox in the United States.

The game console, one of Microsoft's only forays into hardware manufacturing, has been plagued by rumors about its availability and launch date for months.

That concern has weighed on related stocks, such as Santa Clara, California-based NVIDIA Corp., which closed down 8.5 percent on Thursday and was down nearly 10 percent in midafternoon trade on the Nasdaq Friday. NVIDIA is making the primary graphics chip for XBox.

The XBox is the second new console launching this holiday season to be postponed from its original date. Nintendo Co. Ltd. announced in August it would delay its new GameCube to Nov. 18 from Nov. 5 to ensure that it had adequate quantities available at launch.

The GameCube launched in Japan on Sept. 14 with what some Japanese analysts called disappointing early sales. U.S. analysts, however, have suggested that the performance of the console there is not an indicator of its potential here.

The Sept. 11 attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon, which have left over 6,500 people missing and presumed dead, have raised concerns that consumer confidence and spending will be weak going into the crucial year-end holiday shopping season.

The video game industry had been expected to have a banner holiday season on the backs of the XBox and GameCube launches and new titles for Sony Corp.'s PlayStation 2. But those expectations were being ratcheted back by some financial analysts.

Activision Delays NY-Based Game

A video game due to be launched this week that would have featured Spiderman atop a New York skyscraper resembling the World Trade Center will be edited to have that scene removed and released later, publisher Activision Inc. said on Monday.

The Santa Monica, California-based company said in a statement that it was postponing the launch of ''Spider-Man 2 Enter: Electro" for Sony Corp.'s PlayStation console, out of respect for the victims of last week's attacks on the World Trade Center.

''Activision is being extremely cautious about any images in our game that might be mistaken for the twin towers," Chief Operating Officer Ron Doornink said.

The game had been set for release on Tuesday, but will now be changed to alter backgrounds that might look like the destroyed buildings. While no new shipping date has been set, the game will be available in time for the holiday season and the delay will not affect Activision's financial results, Doornink said.

Activision also reaffirmed its second-quarter and fiscal 2002 earnings-per-share guidance. The company expects to earn 1 cent per share in the second quarter and 87 cents for the fiscal year ending March 31 2002.

The two 110-story towers of the World Trade Center were destroyed on Sept. 11 when two hijacked commercial airliners crashed into them. Part of the Pentagon was also destroyed that day by a airliner crash. Over 5,000 people are missing and feared dead.


Electronic Arts Restarts 'Majestic' Online Game


Electronic Arts said on Tuesday it would restart its popular online game ''Majestic," after suspending it for a week due to the World Trade Center attacks.

Majestic is a role-playing game centered on murder and corporate intrigue that has strong interactive elements. Game players occasionally get recorded calls from actors posing as game characters, who are sometimes frantic.

EA suspended the game after the attacks, which destroyed the landmark twin towers of the World Trade Center and also a section of the Pentagon, leaving over 5,500 missing or dead, over concerns that those calls and other elements could be disturbing with so many grieving and in shock after the disaster.

A company spokeswoman said that while the game is now available for play, it has not been automatically restarted for all players. Instead, it has been configured so that players can ''opt-in" to resume when they feel ready.

Majestic has been instantly popular because of its strong sense of mystery and the way that it draws players into an X-Files-like conspiracy. The game which costs $9.99 a month to play through EA's subscription service, was

launched on July 31.

While EA has not released exact user figures for the game, the company did initially say that about 40,000 people had registered for the game prior to launch and a source close to EA said last week that the game has tens of thousands of players.

A raft of new video games have been postponed in the wake of last week's devastating attacks. Many publishers, including EA, have said that they will review cover art and certain scenes from games to remove anything that might be considered offensive.


### EA Games Fits Bond ... James Bond Into the Palm of the Hand With ''The World is Not Enough" for the Gameboy Color System


Fans of the popular James Bond franchise will now be able to carry the experience of being the world's most well known spy in the palm of the hand. EA has released ''The World is Not Enough" the Game Boy Color video game system, the first licensed Bond title ever to be published for the platform.

Based on MGM's blockbuster movie produced by Michael G. Wilson and Barbara Broccoli, ''The World is Not Enough" is a third person perspective arcade action title that places the player in the role of Bond. The game closely follows the movie's exciting storyline as well as stays true to the Bond legacy delivering all the furious action, stealth, state-of-the-art gadgets and sophisticated spy-craft that 007 fans expect.

''The World is Not Enough" for the Game Boy Color features characters from the movie including Dr. Christmas Jones, M and Renard. Each of the movie-based arenas and levels will contain a generous offering of challenging missions and objectives. Mission accomplishments require the clever utilization of an array of Q-lab weapons and gadgets such as electro-proof boots that protect the wearer from electrical damage. The game also feature power-ups in five separate forms including access cards, health, ammunition, weapons and gadgets.

''The World is Not Enough" for the Game Boy Color was developed by 2n Productions under the EA GAMES brand. EA is the worldwide publisher and distributor. More information on the James Bond titles from EA can be found on the dedicated Bond franchise web site at: http://007.ea.com.


### Midway's Arctic Thunder Ices Competition With Intense Combat and Incredible Speed

### Arctic Thunder Launches as Only Next-Generation Snowmobile Action-Racing Game with Weapon Combat


Midway Games announced that Arctic Thunder will ship this week for the PlayStation2 computer entertainment system. Arctic Thunder is also scheduled to ship for the Xbox video game system from Microsoft later this fall.

Pushing the limits on speed, hand-to-hand and weapon combat, Arctic Thunder is a fast-paced, battle-intensive snowmobile racing game. Players can choose from racing veterans -- Agent 5, Candy, Dirty McKurdy, Mai Zhou Lin, Ponzo and Willie Quinn -- or unlock more than ten additional hidden characters. Each character possesses unique skills and personalities that are matched with their own custom snowmobiles. To add more intensity to the racing action players can obliterate their opponents during the race with an arsenal of weapons including atomic snowballs, proximity missiles and super attacks.

''Simply put, this game is 100 percent fun," said Helene Sheeler, vice president of Marketing, Midway. ''It is exhilarating to be able to ride your sled at such dangerously fast speeds, and all the while fire off your incredible arsenal of weaponry!"

In addition to the high-speed combat action, Arctic Thunder also features a multiplayer battle arena mode, where players battle head-to-head in an enclosed ice arena. Players must use an array of explosive weaponry and strategic weapon combat tactics in order to destroy their opponents.

Arctic Thunder lets you shred through 12 wild, nail-biting courses (each with a unique setting) including six open courses: Blizzard in DC, Lost Himalayan City, Chernobyl Meltdown, Swiss Alps, Haunted Forest or Alaskan Pipeline. Players can unlock up to six hidden tracks: Sports Arena, Logging Camp, UFO, China, Atlantis and Theme Park. During the race, players can perform tricks to get points to upgrade their sled and pave their way to victory.

Arctic Thunder Key Features

  * Weapons -- Use weapon power-ups such as atomic snowballs, proximity
    missiles, super attack, snowbombs and more
  * Hand-to-Hand Combat -- Punch and kick opponents off their snowmobiles
  * Additional Power-ups -- Collect boosts for speed, shields for defense
    and health power-ups
  * Twelve Tracks -- Six open including Alaskan Pipeline and Blizzard in
    DC, and six hidden
  * Fifteen Plus Characters -- Six released including Willie Q., Candy and
    Agent 5, with more than ten hidden
  * Tricks -- Perform cool tricks while getting major air to gain points
    and upgrade the sled throughout the game
  * Upgrade Shop -- Increase the snowmobile's power, the number, strength
    and accuracy of power-ups
  * Battle Arena -- Battle head-to-head on several unique enclosed ice
    arenas (PlayStation2 -- two players, Xbox -- two to four players)
  * Amazing Air -- Jump off edges of cliffs into lushly detailed worlds
  * Six Different Modes -- Race, Points, Battle Arena, Upgrade Shop,
    Training and Arcade


Electronic Arts Ships NHL 2002 for the PlayStation 2


Electronic Arts puts the puck in the net with NHL 2002 for PC shipping NHL 2002 for the PlayStation2 computer entertainment system ships next week.

NHL 2002 becomes the first interactive game to completely integrate DTS Interactive audio technology into a next generation console game, bringing

theater-quality sound to NHL 2002 for the PlayStation 2 console. For example, gamers will now be able to hear approaching defenseman skating toward them from various sides in DTS multi-channel surround sound.

In-game music is provided by Barenaked Ladies, the multi-platinum Reprise recording artists from Toronto who will debut ''It's Only Me (The Wizard of Magicland)," also to be released on their greatest hits album titled Disc One: All Their Greatest Hits / 1991-2001. Fans will be able to play as band members through the Create Player feature, allowing them to enter band members' names and save the musician to the team of their choice. Additionally, chart-topping punk band Sum 41 features its hit single ''Fat Lip" as well as ''Makes No Difference." Other bands in NHL 2002 include The Tea Party, Treble Charger, Jet Set Satellite, and more.

NHL 2002 is an official game of the NHL and NHLPA, and includes all 30 NHL franchises, 20 of the world's top International teams, and over 700 face-mapped models of active NHL players, including NHL 2002 spokesman and Penguins owner and center Mario Lemieux.

In order to raise NHL 2002 to the next level in interactive hockey gaming, the development team placed a high priority on enhancing and creating features that reward the user and evoke the same emotional highs that result from intense competition. Thus the creation of features like the new Breakaway Cam, which intensifies one-on-one situations. As the skater stickhandles toward the goal, contested by only the goalie, the camera zooms-in on the player and the sounds of the cheering crowd fade to his pounding heart and scraping skates as he focuses on the scoring opportunity.

EA GameStory, which highlights in-game action through visuals, multiple camera angles, replays, in-game audio and lively commentary by Jim Hughson and Don Taylor. Earning boosts, cheats and un-lockable features through ''NHL Cards" by performing tasks and reaching milestones also accomplish this task by combining challenge, reward, and entertainment for the gamer.

''Our objective with NHL 2002 was to stretch the boundaries, pushing for the ultimate in both realism and entertainment value from the moment the players leave the locker room until the final horn," said Kevin Wilkinson, senior producer of NHL 2002. ''We believe we've done that through a series of new innovations and enhancements including Breakaway Cam, new lighting and camera angles, customized celebrations, user controlled saucer passes, manual dekes, exciting gameplay, enhanced graphics and other added features."

Developed by EA Canada, NHL 2002 for the PC carries an ESRB rating of ''E" for Everyone and a MSRP of US$39.99 for PC-CD and US$49.99 for the PlayStation 2 console. NHL 2002 for Xbox video game system from Microsoft is scheduled to ship in December. The game has a suggested retail price of $49.95.


Mat 'Condor' Hoffman Soars Onto Sega Dreamcast With
the Release Of Activision's Mat Hoffman's Pro BMX


Sega Dreamcast owners can now experience the thrill of catching 20 feet of air while pulling a double tail whip with Activision, Inc.'s Mat Hoffman's Pro BMX. Currently available at retail stores nationwide, the game lets players ride like the 10-time World Vert Champion Mat Hoffman or seven

other top-ranked vert, dirt and street BMX pros. Mat Hoffman's Pro BMX is rated ''E" (Everyone -- with animated blood and mild animated violence) by the ESRB and carries suggested retail prices of $39.99.

Mat Hoffman's Pro BMX features Hoffman and seven of the sport's hottest riders including Cory Nastazio, Simon Tabron, Dennis ''DMC" McCoy, Kevin Robinson, Rick Thorne, Mike ''Rooftop" Escamilla, and Joe ''Butcher" Kowalski. The game challenges players to perform hundreds of tricks and signature moves in a variety of realistic, street, vert and dirt jump courses.

''Mat Hoffman's Pro BMX is the most authentic and exhilarating BMX experience ever created for the Dreamcast," said Larry Goldberg, executive vice president, Activision Worldwide Studios. ''As the 10-time World Vert Champion, we feel that Mat Hoffman's style and talent truly capture the unparalleled thrill of action sports."

Using an intuitive and solid control scheme, the game features 2-player H-O-R-S-E, split-screen Trick Attack and Graffiti for all three types of courses. Gamers can also play in the career mode, moving up the ranks to win the ultimate BMX crown by unlocking new courses and upgrading their bike and rider abilities. The title was developed utilizing an enhanced version of Activision's Tony Hawk's Pro Skater game engine.


THQ Announces ''Hot Wheels Burnin' Rubber" for
Game Boy Advance Set to Release This Fall


THQ Inc. announced ''Hot Wheels Burnin' Rubber" for Nintendo's Game Boy Advance system.

''Hot Wheels Burnin' Rubber" will make its handheld videogame debut this fall.

''THQ is thrilled to expand the Hot Wheels videogame franchise with an all new Game Boy Advance racing game," said Michael Rubinelli, Vice President, Product Development, THQ. ''The speed and performance that Hot Wheels signature car designs are known for, coupled with our Game Boy Advance development experience, promise a quality racer for kids of all ages."

''THQ's leadership position in the kids handheld arena makes them a great interactive partner for our boy's properties," said Amy Boylan, senior vice president of Boys/Entertainment, New Media at Mattel. ''Their development expertise will translate into fun, authentic game play experiences on the Game Boy Advance system."

''Hot Wheels Burnin' Rubber" for Game Boy Advance will feature more than 25 authentic 2000 and 2001 Hot Wheels vehicles. Players will be able to speed around 16 different tracks and environments as they fly over jumps and whip around corners on their way to unlocking 20 hidden cars and special bonus levels.

''Hot Wheels Burnin' Rubber" offers gamers seven different modifications for their cars including high powered engines, tires, suspension, and exhaust. Multi-player mode will let players go head to head against friends with their favorite modified cars. This unique title is the first Hot Wheels game produced and developed by THQ and will include a new save feature that requires no passwords.

THQ will also release three other Hot Wheels videogames this fall. ``Hot Wheels Jetz" and ``Hot Wheels Mechanix" for the PC, and ``Hot Wheels Extreme Racing" for the PlayStation are all scheduled to release later this fall.


NBA ShootOut 2002 Takes the Court With High-Flying
Basketball Action For the PS One Console


Sony Computer Entertainment America Inc. announced that NBA ShootOut 2002 from the 989 Sports development team is now available in stores, marking the release of the latest installment of the heralded PlayStation basketball franchise. NBA ShootOut 2002 features new gameplay with updated graphics, as well as customizing options for players and playbooks. Coupled with restructured artificial intelligence (AI) and refined player models, NBA ShootOut 2002 produces the most authentic basketball action for sports enthusiasts and fans alike.

No other PlayStation basketball game replicates the high-flying competition of the NBA better than NBA ShootOut 2002. Updated graphics features include recognizable player models and impeccably designed arenas and courts. With top NBA athletes motion captured performing an assortment of outstanding dunks, effortless outside shots and spectacular dribbling, NBA ShootOut 2002 brings true-to-life NBA action to your television. Arenas are designed to mirror reality as courts resonate realism with true lighting and sound effects. Players are scaled to reflect height, weight and body styles and individual faces have been texture mapped from authentic NBA photos to further enhance the realism of NBA ShootOut 2002.

``NBA ShootOut 2002 provides the most realistic and exciting basketball action available for PlayStation," said Ami Blaire, director, product marketing, Sony Computer Entertainment America Inc. ``With refined graphics and the best gameplay available, the 989 Sports team has developed a game that genuinely lives up to the high-flying action of the NBA."

Whether playing a leisurely game in Exhibition mode or taking on all comers through a full season and into the Playoffs, NBA ShootOut 2002 offers a true interactive basketball experience. With an array of options and challenges including statistics following the progress of every player in the game, hot and cold streaks for shooters and the ability to set screens and call for picks in order to free up the player with the hot hand, NBA ShootOut 2002 brings to life the skill, energy and athleticism that is the NBA.

    NBA ShootOut 2002 for PlayStation Key Features:
    -- Refined GamePlay and Restructured Artificial Intelligence (AI) bring
       fast paced NBA realism to life.  Improved computer management of
       passing, clock, fouls and timeouts further enhance the realism of the
       game.  Additionally, the computer AI will take advantage of gamer
       miscues and tendencies.
    -- Award-Winning Graphics including recognizable player models taken from
       motion captured movements of NBA athletes reflecting actual height,
       weight and body style.  Arenas are designed to mirror reality while
       courts resonate realism with true lighting and sound effects.
    -- 18 1-Touch Player Controls include Screen, Auto Defend, Pump Fake,
       Special Dribble and more.  Players won't get bogged down with
       cumbersome controller combinations and more advanced controls have also

been simplified for better player movement.
-- TV-Style Presentation now with a two-man booth featuring more than 100
   hours of play-by-play from commentators Ian Eagle and Bill Walton.
-- Playbooks Designed With NBA Stars include more than 450 team specific
   plays and sets designed to replicate every team in the NBA.  Top NBA
   players consulted include Stephon Marbury, Chris Webber, Jason Kidd,
   "Bo" Outlaw, Robert Horry and more.
-- NBA Signature Animations from more than a dozen NBA stars.  Motion
   captured animations include everything from ball control and passing to
   shooting and rebounding and more than 50 signature dunks.
-- Total Control Passing allows gamers to pick passes and get the ball to
   a specific teammate, or work the defense and kick the ball outside for
   the open three-pointer.
-- Total Control Screening allows gamers to set a pick or call for a
   screen to give the hot shooter the open look.
-- Touch Shooting helps players to refine their touch by using the shot
   meter to control the accuracy of the shot.
-- Total Control Dribbling puts ball control in the palm of your hands as
   players go between the legs, behind the back or go for the cross-over
   dribble.
-- Create Dunk will have gamers fabricating unbelievably unique dunks with
   bits and pieces of the most famous dunks in the game.
-- Hot & Cold Streaks effect the game just like the pros.  Hitting three
   consecutive shots to puts a player in the zone while missing three
   consecutive will cause a player to have trouble hitting from the paint.
-- Create Player allows gamers to utilize player ratings to create an
   all-world talent or design a player to reflect their own
   characteristics.
-- Play Creator lets gamers design their own custom plays and save them to
   a playbook for the ultimate offensive edge.
-- Comprehensive Statistical Analysis allows gamers to track stats for
   teams, individuals and league leaders through the monitoring of
   comparison charts.
-- Extensive Roster Management allows a gamer to edit the starting lineup,
   trade players or release and sign free agents to build a dynasty.
   Six Game Modes including Exhibition, Season or Playoffs in Simulation
   and Arcade modes, each with four levels of difficulty.
-- Extensive In-Game Options allow gamers to control every aspect of the
   game from quarter length to fatigue, touch shooting, player ID and auto
   replays.

The independent Entertainment Software Rating Board (ESRB) rates NBA
ShootOut 2002 ''E" for ''Everyone."


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                     A-ONE's Headline News
               The Latest in Computer Technology News
                   Compiled by: Dana P. Jacobson



                  Apple Cancels Expo Show in Paris


Apple Computer Inc. has called off its Apple Expo 2001 show in Paris,

joining a growing list of business events canceled in light of last week's terrorist attacks.

''We're sorry to disappoint our users and developers, but their safety is our primary concern," chief executive Steve Jobs said Monday.

The Expo, in its third year, was scheduled to run from Sept. 26-30. Last year, 65,000 people, primarily from Europe, attended.


## HP To Ship PCs With Windows XP


Hewlett-Packard on Monday plans to debut new PCs loaded with Microsoft's Windows XP operating system.

The company plans to begin shipping the systems next week. In a move following Gateway, HP also will take preorders on custom-configured systems starting Sept. 21, with anticipated delivery as early as next Monday. The company also expects to begin selling new Windows XP systems in retail stores on the same day.

Microsoft has cleared PC makers to begin selling new Windows XP desktops and portables starting Sept. 24, about one month before the new operating system's Oct. 25 official launch.

As HP and its competitors prepare for the first salvo of Windows XP computers, analysts are increasingly concerned the new operating system will have negligible to no impact on holiday PC sales.

If consumer confidence plummets, as some analysts predict following last week's devastating terrorist attacks in New York and Washington, the Grinch, not Santa, may greet many retailers this holiday season, analysts warn.

"People aren't going to go out and buy new PCs for the features in XP. It's just not going to happen," said Technology Business Research analyst Brooks Gray. "There is a large amount of people feeling the impact of the economy right now, myself being one of them. Then you have the saturation of the PC market. The drivers aren't there for people to go out and necessarily purchase a new PC."

Even before last week's national tragedy, analysts were taking a grim view of holiday PC sales, even as Microsoft, Intel, PC makers and retailers prepared to launch a $1 billion Windows XP marketing blitz.

"I just don't see Windows XP doing much for holiday sales," said ARS Toni Duboise. "It's good that it's coming out on new PCs before the fourth quarter, but beyond that I don't see much benefit."

Earlier this month, market researcher IDC cut its 2001 PC shipment forecast to a decline of 1.6 percent from 5.8 percent growth. In the United States, IDC predicted PC sales would plummet about 13 percent from a year earlier.

But some new PC buyers held out for Windows XP and are ready to place their orders.

"I personally waited to purchase a new computer because of Windows XP. I

was actually ready to purchase a new computer about six months ago," said Scott Guttenberg, a tax account from East Meadow, N.Y.

Guttenberg, who is considering buying from HP rival Dell Computer, didn't want to go through the hassle of a Windows XP upgrade. "I have heard to many problems exist when you change your operating system," he explained. "I thought this was good reason to wait for Windows XP rather than buying an obsolete operating system such as Windows Me."

Possibly sensitive to the potentially hostile sales climate, HP will pony up some fully loaded Windows XP PCs at surprisingly low prices.

The entry-level Pavilion 7935 consumer PC, with 1.3GHz AMD Athlon processor, 128MB of SDRAM, 40GB hard drive, 8X CD-RW drive and network connector starts at $749. For $200 more, the Pavilion 7955 packs a 1.5GHz Pentium 4 processor, 256MB of SDRAM, 40GB hard drive, 16X DVD drive, 12X CD-RW drive, 32MB nVidia TNT2 M64 graphics card and front-access USB and IEEE 1394 ports. The company also is offering a $150 mail-in rebate on certain monitors, which are sold separately.

These new Pavilions are priced considerably less than current 7940 and 7960 models, both which pack slower processors. The 7940 sells for around $850 from major retailers, such as Circuit City and CompUSA, while the 7960 goes for $1,050.

On the notebook front, HP initially will offer two Windows XP models: the Pavilion N5425 and N5415. The first model sells for $1,600, with 900MHz AMD Athlon processor, 256MB of SDRAM, 20GB hard drive, combo DVD/CD-RW drive and Ethernet card. The N5415, with 900MHz AMD Duron processor, 256MB of SDRAM, 10GB hard drive and 8X DVD drive for $1,299. HP will offer a $100 mail-in rebate with both models.

HP will bring the new systems to market, at least at retail, from a position of strength. Year-to-date, the company has about 42 percent retail store market share compared to 34 percent for Compaq Computer, according to NPD Intelect.

But HP is in the process of buying Compaq, which could help the company solidify its lead over other companies selling through stores, such as Apple Computer, Sony and Toshiba.

HP may still face a stiff challenge from Dell Computer and Gateway, but for now is holding its own on price. Gateway's 500S starts at $999--$50 more than the Pavilion 7955--but comes with a 17-inch monitor. The downside: Half the memory, smaller hard drive and no DVD drive of the comparably priced Pavilion.

Dell's Dimension 4300 is nearly identically configured to the Pavilion 7955 but with a 17-inch monitor and no CD-RW drive for heftier $1,300. Even adding the cost of a monitor to the price of the Pavilion, the rebate brings it below Dell model.


Judge Delays Microsoft Scheduling


A federal judge on Tuesday gave the government and Microsoft more time in which to file a joint scheduling proposal for the remedy phase of the antitrust case due to last week's terrorist attacks.

A federal judge on Tuesday gave the government and Microsoft more time in which to file a joint scheduling proposal for the remedy phase of the antitrust case due to last week's terrorist attacks.

U.S. District Judge Colleen Kollar-Kotelly directed the Justice Department and 18 states and Microsoft to submit a timeframe for the hearings on Sept. 20 and appear before her on Sept. 28. This was the second delay for the status report.

The Court of Appeals in June ruled that Microsoft held a monopoly in operating systems and used illegal methods to maintain its dominance, but struck the company break-up and sent the case back to the lower court for an appropriate remedy. The government has since dropped pursuit of a company break-up and a comprehensive review of product bundling, instead opting for conduct restrictions that can be imposed quickly and effectively.


### More States Say Windows XP Poses Antitrust Issues


The attorneys general of six states on Friday added their support to the government's antitrust case against Microsoft Corp. and expressed concerns about how the company's new Windows XP operating system will affect competition in the software industry.

In a letter sent to Microsoft Chief Executive Steve Ballmer, Vermont's William Sorrell and five other attorneys general said they wanted to ''add our voices to those calling on Microsoft to remedy the antitrust problems that are now evident."

''We are concerned that Windows XP may involve additional unlawful attempts by Microsoft to maintain its operating system monopoly," Sorrell wrote in his letter to Ballmer.

The attorneys general from Arkansas, Maine, Montana, New Hampshire and Rhode Island all co-signed the letter. None of them are among the 18 states that have joined the Justice Department case against Microsoft.

''We agree with our colleagues, the litigating states and the federal government, that any anti-competitive aspects of Windows XP should be addressed," the letter said.

Microsoft's allies in the software industry dismissed the letter as a ploy drafted by a lobbyist for the company's archrival, America Online Inc. One pro-Microsoft trade group, the Association for Competitive Technology, called it "tactless" and said it was AOL's ''latest and lowest attempt to prolong and even expand this saga."

AOL spokesman John Buckley said the company was ''wholly uninvolved with the letter."

Regardless, the show of support from the additional six states could bolster the government's position as the case heads into a critical, remedy phase before U.S. District Court Judge Colleen Kollar-Kotelly.

It also could strengthen the government's case if it decides to ask Kollar-Kotelly to order changes to Windows XP. Some state attorneys general

have expressed concerns that some of the features in the new operating system, such as a media player and instant messaging, could hurt competition in the software business.

Kollar-Kotelly is expected to hold hearings early next year to determine what remedies should be imposed on Microsoft to prevent future antitrust violations.

In order to move the case faster, the government has dropped the idea of a Microsoft break-up and abandoned one of its original charges against the company.

Rather than break up Microsoft, the government said it will ask for restrictions on Microsoft's business tactics that would be modeled after a set of interim sanctions handed down last year by the trial court judge in the case, U.S. District Court Judge Thomas Penfield Jackson.

That remedy, among other things, would require the company to give outside software developers greater access to the Windows source code, the basic programming instructions for its software.

It also would ban Microsoft from bolting so-called middleware into Windows unless it is made removable from the operating system. Middleware is software that connects two otherwise separate applications.

Microsoft attorneys argue that any remedy in the case should be restricted to products at issue during the trial. In a report filed with the court on Thursday, Microsoft said the interim conduct remedies ''are every bit as radical as the now-discarded proposal to break up the company ... ''

But in Friday's letter, the six new attorneys general complained that Microsoft ''may have constructed this new product without due regard for relevant legal rulings, and without due regard for other issues involving consumer choice and consumer privacy."

They also expressed some concern that Microsoft will withdraw support for current versions of Windows, which are used by many state government agencies.


Versatile Nimda Computer Worm Hits Worldwide


A damaging new computer worm was spreading like wildfire across the Internet on Tuesday, hitting both home PC users and commercial servers, in an outbreak that could prove more widespread and costly than the Code Red viruses, computer security experts said.

Known as ''Nimda," which spells admin backward, the worm spreads by sending infected e-mails and through infected Web sites, making it a more malicious and versatile virus than earlier Internet threats, experts said.

The mass-mailing worm arrives in e-mail without a subject line and containing an attachment titled ''readme.exe" that is disguised as a harmless audio file, experts said.

As of late Tuesday afternoon, the worm had not significantly slowed overall traffic on the Internet, although some corporate networks had bogged down, analysts said. Nimda was first noticed in widespread circulation on Tuesday

morning and fanned out to Fortune 500 companies and public agencies through the day.

About 130,000 Web servers and personal computers appeared to be infected with Nimda as of Tuesday afternoon, said David Moore, senior researcher at Cooperative Association for Internet Data Analysis at UC San Diego's Supercomputer Center. Internet security experts warned of the potential for an increase in virus activity after last week's attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon, but U.S. Attorney General John Ashcroft said there was no sign the outbreak was linked to those events. ''There is no evidence at this time which links this infection to the terrorist attacks of last week," Ashcroft told a news briefing.

Ashcroft said Nimda could prove ''heavier" than the Code Red worm that caused an estimated $2.6 billion in clean-up costs after outbreaks in July and August.

''Compared to Code Red, it may well be bigger simply because it can affect home users as well," said Graham Cluley, senior technical consultant for Sophos Antivirus.

The origin of the virus was not clear and experts said it could take weeks before that would be known.

''Based on personal experience and talking to 50 or so people on the Internet and customers, we're only seeing a minimal slowdown in network traffic right now," said Jim Jones, director of analysis and reporting for New York-based Predictive Systems.

In addition to spreading via e-mail, like the fast-spreading Melissa virus, Nimda also has the potential to generate so much Internet traffic that that it slows networks, like the Code Red worm.

''This one is the Swiss Army knife of worms," said Dan Ingevaldson, who heads the security threat search arm of Internet Security Systems Inc., an Atlanta-based network security consultancy and software firm. ''It really seems to try everything."

If Microsoft Corp.'s Outlook e-mail program has not been patched with an update that became available in March, the recipient does not even need to open the email attachment to activate the virus. Opening the e-mail itself is sufficient, said Vincent Weafer, senior director of Symantec Corp.'s Symantec Security Response unit.

The worm will then send copies of itself to all the e-mail addresses in the infected users' address books, analysts said.

Other e-mail programs, such as Eudora or International Business Machine Corp.'s Lotus Notes, require the attachment to be opened for the virus to replicate, he said.

To protect against infection, experts urged home PC users to set their browsers for the highest level of security when surfing the Internet to prevent their PCs from being infected.

''At the core, it is really a cocktail of a virus plus a Trojan (horse program) plus a worm," said Arvind Narain, senior vice president of Internet Services for anti-virus company Network Associates Inc.

Nimda does not appear capable of erasing files or data, but has shown

itself capable of slowing down computer operations as it replicates, experts said.

The worm had appeared in the United States, Europe and Latin America on Tuesday and was likely to spread elsewhere, analysts said. ''It seems to be very widespread and (moves) at an incredibly quick rate," Cluley said.

Nimda exploits an already detected vulnerability in Microsoft's Internet Information Server Web software running on Windows NT or 2000 machines, the same breach that the Code Red viruses exploited, experts said.

Once Nimda infects a machine, it tries to replicate in three ways. It has its own e-mail engine and will try to send itself out using addresses stored in e-mail programs. It also scans IIS servers looking for the known vulnerability and attacks those servers. Finally, it looks for shared disk drives and tries to reach those devices, Symantec's Weafer said.

The California agency that controls most of the state's power grid said that its office had been infected by a form of the Nimda worm, but that no critical operations were affected.

''The systems which run the grid and the market are totally different, and are completely unaffected," said Stephanie McCorkle, a spokeswoman for the California Independent System Operator (ISO).

Experts urged companies and users to update anti-virus software and to download available software patches.

Patches are available for both the IIS vulnerability and Web browsers at (http://www.microsoft.com/security).

The major anti-virus software companies updated their products to detect the Nimda worm on Tuesday and made new versions of their programs available to customers on their Web sites.


DOJ Brewing Expansive Anti-terror Proposal


The U.S. Department of Justice wants its wiretapping and other surveillance capabilities vastly expanded, with the Internet and other modern communications technologies among the targets of the government's new war on terrorism, according to experts who are familiar with a new Department of Justice proposal.

The proposal should be officially released on Thursday said a DOJ official. It would apply telephone wiretapping rules to the Internet and it would formally endorse Carnivore, the e-mail surveillance tool of the department that has been vehemently denounced by civil liberties advocates since its discovery last year, said David Sobel, general counsel for the Electronic Privacy Information Center.

Until now, Attorney General John Ashcroft had not announced whether he would permit the use of Carnivore.

The pending proposal has spawned the birth of an unlikely confederation of organizations ranging from the left-leaning American Civil Liberties Union to the staunchly conservative Free Congress Foundation called the In Defense of Freedom coalition.

Alarmed by the fevered race toward passing anti-terrorism legislation, much of which could affect civil liberties, coalition members have banded together to try to persuade lawmakers to slow down.

Sobel said he had been studying drafts of the document throughout the day Wednesday. Late Wednesday, he said sources in the department told him the drafts were "changing hourly."

"I think it's going to take some time to see the final introduced version and to fully analyze the potential impact on communications privacy," he said. "But the early indications are that the proposal is far reaching, and it remains to be seen whether a need for these sweeping changes can be demonstrated."

Particularly troubling, said Sobel, are attempts to remove the traditional line between domestic law enforcement and foreign intelligence.

One lawmaker, Sen. Patrick Leahy, D-Vt., chairman of the Judiciary Committee, plans to submit legislation this week with the dual aim of protecting civil liberties while still giving law enforcement sufficient surveillance rights, said spokesman David Carle.

Carle said Leahy is "working as rapidly as humanly possible" on proposals to temper the Aschcroft proposal, but added that "it's a mistake to set artificial deadlines on this legislation, particularly with the delicate balance between civil liberties and law enforcement" under enormous pressure to shift.

The Senate has already passed one anti-terrorism amendment to the Commerce-Justice-State appropriations bill that expands the wiretapping and cybersurveillance powers of law enforcement officers.

"There's a lot of stuff here that needs to be publicly debated," said Mike Godwin, a policy analyst with the Center for Democracy and Technology. He said the package of legislative proposals was highly complex, and he was taking it home with him after work to read.

Civil liberties activists like Sobel and Godwin are frantically trying to obtain and digest updated versions of the document before it captivates lawmakers, who could pass the legislation as quickly as they choose. Earlier this week, Ashcroft urged lawmakers to pass the legislation by the end of the week. But Sobel said that's unlikely to happen. "I'm hearing late [Wednesday] that the attempt to rush this through has subsided," said Sobel. "It sounds like they have backed off, and there will in fact be hearings."


                    Office For Mac OS X Due In November


Microsoft on Wednesday revealed the name of its forthcoming Office suite for Apple Computer's Mac OS X operating system and firmed up the product's pricing and delivery date.

The new product--code-named Office 10 and now officially called Office v. X for Mac--will ship sometime in November and cost as much as $499, although many current users could pay as little as $149.

No other Mac product released this year is likely to be more important to Apple than Office v. X, say some Mac users. With other major Mac developers--such as Adobe--lagging behind in getting out OS X products, Microsoft's support could be crucial to driving upgrades of the operating system. Apple released its next-generation Mac OS in March, although many important applications had not yet been written for the operating system.

"Mac OS X needs native software," said Brad Oesch, a Mac user from Zurich, Ontario. "Sure, it's got great features like pre-emptive multi-tasking and protected memory, but it needs applications to take advantage of these new features...Microsoft Office 10 will be one of the most important apps to move onto OS X."

Oesch expressed frustration that other major Mac developers appear to be dragging their heels in supporting Mac OS X. "There's so little for X right now, and professionals simply won't make the switch until their apps are ready," he said.

Because of the applications problem, Oesch reverts to Mac OS 9 to edit video or create animations using Macromedia's Flash. "Making the OS feel responsive and bringing more apps to OS X are the two key challenges for Apple right now," he emphasized.

Office v. X comes a little more than a year after the last major release, Office 2001. Both products offer the same basic set of applications: Word, the Excel spreadsheet, the PowerPoint presentation program and Entourage--the combination e-mail, scheduling, and task- and contact-management software.

The new version fully supports Mac OS X, including the Aqua user interface. Microsoft estimates that about 500,000 of the 3.5 million Mac Office users run the 2001 version. Users of the most recent Office or other Microsoft 2001 version productivity products, such as Word + Entourage SE, will be able to upgrade for $149. Other users can upgrade for $299, while the full suite costs $499. Standalone versions of the individual products, such as Word, will sell for $399.

Users running older Mac OS versions--9.2.1 is the most recent one available--must stick with Office 2001. Those users already running Mac OS X 10 through 10.04 will have to upgrade their operating system. The new Office requires Mac OS X 10.1.

Apple is scheduled to release Mac OS X 10.1 later this month.

Luca Bonatti, a Mac user and cognitive psychology researcher from Trieste, Italy, said Apple and Microsoft have both done well enough for him to stick with Office 2001. The reason: Office 2001 runs smoothly in Mac OS X's "Classic" compatibility mode.

"I didn't feel any special loss by not having a (native) version of Office," he said. "I do think that the upgrade is important for the public at large because it will remove the last reason to resist...switching to OS X."

Many new features in the Mac version are not found in its Windows counterpart, Office XP. Microsoft made significant enhancements to Entourage, but it also fine-tuned Word and Excel, said Erik Ryan, Microsoft's Mac Office product manager.

Entourage now supports international formats for contact addresses, which

is important for some countries outside the U.S. where zip codes appear before the city or phone numbers are longer.

"Another new feature we've added is international time zone addresses, so that if you're on the West Coast and you're scheduling a meeting with someone on the East Coast, it will automatically adjust for everyone's calendars," Ryan said.

With Office 2001, Microsoft introduced "categories" with Entourage, making it easier to sort, search or custom-view contacts, e-mail and other data. But unlike Office XP's Outlook 2002, the categories can be color-coded.

"Categories, in our opinion, is a bridge feature," said Michael Connolly, Microsoft's MacBusiness Unit group program manager. "You either use it or you don't."

Midlevel to high-end users as well as those relying on Palm handhelds more typically like the categories, Microsoft has found. "If you're using the calendar function, for example, the user experience is so much richer," Connolly said. "In fact, in usability studies, color-coding is the No. 1 most important aspect of that feature."

Categories also can be used as part of Office v. X's Custom View feature, which lets people organize and filter Entourage e-mail, contacts, tasks and other data. In addition, Microsoft enhanced the links feature, which lets people connect disparate data, such as e-mail, contacts or appointments, for cross-reference.

Entourage now supports Apple's Keychain feature, which offers password-protected encryption of a person's data file.

Other differences between the Mac and Windows versions of Office are subtle but significant. The new Mac Office does not use the controversial product-activation feature that has raised the ire of some Windows users. For Office XP, people must activate the product over the Internet, essentially locking it to the PC's hardware configuration.

Instead of going that far, Microsoft increased to 24 from 11 the number of characters of the product key code, which is required to install the product.

Office v. X also doesn't support Smart Tags, the controversial information-linking technology pulled from Microsoft's Internet Explorer 6 browser but kept in Office XP.

"We think it might be put in someday, but for this release we didn't see it improving any of the different scenarios that we're targeting," Connolly said.

But one important similarity between the Windows and Mac versions of Office is beginning support for Microsoft's .Net software-as-a-service strategy. In Office XP, for example, MSN Messenger is integrated into the product, offering hooks to .Net. While Office v. X doesn't go that far, the forthcoming MSN Messenger 2.1 will come in the box and support the Office Notifications feature.

Office Notifications work across all parts of the suite, reminding users about pending appointments and other tasks. The feature also runs in the background, even when Office programs are closed.

"Let's say you've signed up for MSN stock alerts or travel info; those updates can be delivered as Microsoft .Net alerts, and those .Net alerts can appear in your Office Notifications application," Ryan said.

Another important change is the ability to share calendar information with Outlook users. Microsoft, in fact, has separate Outlook versions for the Mac and Windows, both of which connect to Exchange server. But Entourage does not use Exchange, making sharing information with Outlook users difficult.

"It works using iCal, a standard which not only Entourage supports but Outlook as well," Connolly said. "In fact, any e-mail or PIM (personal information manager) that supports iCal can interoperate as well."

One area where Entourage is playing catch-up with Outlook and some other e-mail programs is support for rich content, such as video clips or MP3.

"Now you can insert that rich media right into the body of your message," Ryan said. "So if you're sending a picture of your friend's birthday...and you want to send it to your family, it will be right there and they don't have to click on anything to open it."


Online Ads Need To Get A Clue


From ZDNet

Shoving your message into unreceptive faces may work for TV, radio, and billboards, but on the Net, surfers control what they see and hear, say Taylor & Jerome. Here's the straight story on which advertisers are making money on the Web, and how they're doing it.

COMMENTARY--Online advertising is dead. Nim-nods who still believe in its magic are bankruptcy bait. Pitch an Internet business that relies on ads for revenues, and venture capitalists will smirk, then politely point you to the door.

We hate to crash a funeral, but advertisers spent some $8.2 billion online in 2000. Spending will stagnate or slip this year-but then, it's backsliding across all media. Fact is, online ads are quickly catching up with the $11.2 billion advertisers spent on cable TV. Cable, it should be noted, took a quarter century to rack up those kinds of dollars.

The problem is actually simpler: Online advertisements blow. Banner ads-screen zits-were a bad idea from the get-go. Click-click, your reward is a cheesy TV commercial reduced to an even cheesier PowerPoint presentation. Worse are the pop-up and Shockwave ads you want to swat like hairy houseflies. Or how about product demos that lure you deeper and deeper into their sites, gently probing for personal information? Are you buying drill bits or joining a cult?

It's no wonder that most online ads fail. But at least a handful of advertisers are getting a clue. Ford, BMW, Coke, and Absolut Vodka have recently poured millions of dollars into "advertainments" for the Web, featuring such familiar names as Madonna and Mickey Rourke, and directed by the likes of Spike Lee, John Frankenheimer, and Ang Lee. (Check them out at focusinfilm.com, bmwfilms.com, dietcoke.com, and absolutdirector.com.)

Call them filmlets-these ads run two to 11 minutes in length and teem with edgy car chases, celebrities, flying bullets, and dirty jokes. Surfers love them. And the message to other advertisers should be clear: Shoving your message into unreceptive faces may work for TV, radio, and turnpike billboards, but on the Net, surfers control what they see and hear.

Filmlets aren't the only sign that advertisers are beginning to give back for the access rights to your eyes and ears.

Aimovie.com, the official site for Steven Spielberg's latest summer blockbuster, A.I., features a "chatbot" that instantly strikes up a conversation with you. Warner Bros., which built the site, declines to say how much traffic it gets, but expect one-off marketing sites to continue to grow.

Miller Brewing Company hired RedSky, an interactive ad agency based in New York, to create the Miller Lite Beer pager, an interactive application that lets surfers send personalized e-invitations to friends, complete with a funky Miller Lite animation.

Twentieth Century Fox converted the home page of Ask Jeeves' Ask.com site into a desert island to promote the video release of the movie Cast Away and sent the volleyball from the film bouncing across the screen.

Anheuser-Busch pours a bottle of Budweiser, foam and all, down the side of CBS MarketWatch.com's front page to usher in happy hour on Fridays.

Hewlett-Packard's "Invent" campaign, designed by ad agency Freestyle Interactive, made the brand interactive by designing banners that allow surfers to adjust the size and shape of a paper airplane to see how it flies.

None of these ideas will win an Emmy. And they blur the lines between content and come-on. They give conventional editors and producers the creeps. But there's no stopping them. And for now, surfers are less concerned about integrity than access rights: If you want to sell us perfume or a pager, a digital camera or dessert topping, make it worth our while.


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